

**Yellowstone County FSA**  
**1629 Ave. D, Bldg. A**  
**Billings, MT 59102**

#### **County Committee Members**

Forrest Ewen, Chairman  
Bart Erickson, Vice-Chairman  
Ken Uffelman, Regular Member  
Channis Whiteman, Minority Adv.  
Juanita Stovall, Minority Adv.

#### **FSA Office Personnel**

Nina Gonzalez, PT  
Jackie Gaglia, PT  
Lisa Pederson, PT  
Karen Sims, Farm Loan PT  
Mike Turley, Farm Loan Mgr.  
William Ballard, Farm Loan Mgr.  
Kevin Johnson, CED

#### **Dates to Remember:**

**May 1** – Final day to provide maps for crop reporting purposes.

**May 15-August 1** – Primary Nesting Season for CRP contracts affected by the National Wildlife Federations settlement agreement with FSA

**June 15** – County Committee nomination process opens.

**Notice of Loss** – filed within 15 calendar days of the natural disaster occurrence or the date the damage to the crop or loss of production was apparent.

**July 1** - Final day to sign crop reports.

**August 1** – Deadline for reconstitutions and filing County Committee nomination forms.

**September 30 – October 1** – Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium, Billings

Special accommodations will be made for the physically handicapped, vision or hearing impaired upon request. If accommodation is required, please contact Kevin Johnson, CED at (406) 657-6135.



# **Yellowstone County FSA**

## **May 2008**

### **CRP Management Activities**

Producers with recently re-enrolled CRP CP-18B acreages and/or signup 26 re-enrolled contracts must perform management activities (ground disturbing, inter-seeding legumes, residue management, fertilization) to ensure plant diversity, wildlife benefits and to protect soil and water resources. Management activities are conducted outside the established primary nesting season (May 15<sup>th</sup> to August 1<sup>st</sup>). Each management activity has specific time frames when the activity can be performed. Producers with contracts exceeding 80 acres are required to perform management activities on ½ the acreage in 2008 and the other ½ in 2009. (Producers with less than 80 acres on a contract may perform the activity on all the acreage in either 2008 or 2009.) Managed and/or emergency haying/grazing utilized in one of the years (i.e. 2008, 2009) will negate the required management activity for that specific year. In addition, if requested by the CRP participant and approved by the County Committee, the management activity will not be required if haying or grazing was completed within the previous 2 years.

Failure to perform the required management activities is considered a contract violation. **A standard payment reduction of \$16 per acre will be assessed for failing to perform the required management activities.** Producers were previously notified of the specific guidelines after the first of the year.

### **Changes to Your Farming Operation**

To ensure a smooth transition when a new Farm Bill is passed, FSA is encouraging producers to notify us of any changes to your farming operation including land ownership or lease changes, entity changes including members and shares, and who is authorized to sign documents for the operation or individuals. It is anticipated there will be policy changes and new forms to complete when new programs are implemented. Details will be published in this newsletter as they are known.

### Livestock Compensation Program

Signup for the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) began September 10, 2007. The program in Yellowstone County provides benefits to livestock producers for feed losses, and additional feed costs caused by natural disasters that occurred in 2006.

To be eligible for LCP, an owner or contract grower's livestock must have been located in Yellowstone County or a contiguous county designated a natural disaster by the President or declared by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. To be eligible for LCP, producers must have:

- Either owned or cash-leased eligible livestock (but not both for the same livestock) on the beginning date of the applicable disaster period(s); and
- Suffered an eligible feed loss from produced or purchased forage or feed, or incurred additional feed costs as a result of an eligible disaster event(s) during the applicable disaster period(s) and the feed lost or additional incurred feed costs were intended for use with eligible livestock. Feed purchases for eligible livestock must have been made between January 1, 2006 and May 1, 2007.

For detailed explanations of eligible livestock and eligibility requirements, logon to the Montana FSA website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>.

### Improper Payments

The Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (IPEA) implemented stronger internal controls and reviews of payments issued. The FSA database of payments issued will be compared against the Social Security Administration (SSA) database of deceased individuals. **It is very important that FSA be notified of the death of a landowner, member of an entity, or anyone that may be earning USDA benefits.** There are actions that can be taken to ensure payments are issued correctly and not considered an overpayment. Contact this office for more information.

### COC Election Approaching

Beginning **June 15, 2008**, nominations are being accepted for candidates for the County Committee (COC) position. This year the LAA open in Yellowstone County is the area encompassing the Yellowstone River Valley. Forrest (Butch) Ewen currently serves this area.

The nominee must sign the nomination form in order to be nominated as a COC member. A nomination form is included in this newsletter. Instructions are available at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt>.

Nomination forms must be submitted to this office by **August 1, 2008**. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning November 3, 2008. The final day for voters to submit their voted ballots is December 1, 2008.

### CRP Participant Responsibilities

CRP contract holders have certain responsibilities for carrying out the terms and conditions of the CRP contract. Those include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Control all weeds, insects, pests and other undesirable species to the extent necessary to ensure the establishment and maintenance of the approved cover is adequately protected and there is no adverse impact on surrounding land.
- ✓ Establish and maintain the required vegetative or water cover and other required practices.
- ✓ No activity may be conducted on CRP acres without authorization.
- ✓ Prior approval must be received from FSA before any harvesting, grazing or other commercial use of the forage may begin.
- ✓ If land with a CRP contract is sold, the new owners should notify this office if they want to continue the contract.

**If CRP land is sold and the new owner does not choose to continue the CRP contract, the previous CRP participant will be required to repay all payments received on the contract, plus interest and liquidated damages.**

Liquidated damages are equal to 25 percent of the annual rental payment on those acres not contracted by the new owner.

### Crop Disaster Program (CDP) Quantity & Quality Loss

CDP provides benefits to farmers who suffered quantity and/or quality losses from natural disasters. Signup for CDP began October 15, 2007. Producers who incurred qualifying losses in 2005, 2006 or 2007 may choose only one year to apply for benefits. Producers may apply for benefits for losses to multiple commodities as long as the losses occurred in the same crop year. Only producers who obtained crop insurance coverage or coverage under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for the year of loss will be eligible for CDP benefits.

Producers must have suffered **quantity** losses in excess of 35 percent to be eligible for CDP. Commodities must have suffered a 25% reduction in value due to **quality**.

The payment rate is set at 42 percent of the established price. Producers may receive a maximum of \$80,000 in CDP benefits. Contact Jackie Gaglia at 657-6135 ext. 106 for details.

### Ensure Benefits Are Received in a Timely Manner

To ensure USDA program benefits are received in a timely manner, please ensure you are consistent in the way you are presenting your operation to all USDA agencies including NRCS, Risk Management Agency (RMA), FSA and any other USDA agency programs you may partake in. For example, if you have signed up for program benefits with FSA as Joe Farmer, please sign up with NRCS as Joe Farmer. This will ensure Joe Farmer has completed all program paperwork and is eligible to receive payments. When in doubt, ask.



## NOMINATION FORM FOR COUNTY FSA COMMITTEE ELECTION

1. NAME OF NOMINEE (Type or print Nominee's Full Name)		<b>TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNTY FSA OFFICE</b>
2. ADDRESS OF NOMINEE		
3. <b>NOMINEE'S CERTIFICATION</b> <i>I hereby agree to have my name placed on the ballot, that I will serve if elected, and if there is a conflict of interest, I will resign such position.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> I DO want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee. <input type="checkbox"/> I DO NOT want to witness the settling of tied votes with another nominee.		5. INITIALS OF EMPLOYEE RECEIVING FORM AND DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)
		6A. COUNTY YELLOWSTONE
		6B. LA# NO. 2
		7. STATE MONTANA
4A. SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE	4B. DATE (MM-DD-YYYY)	<b>DATE OF ELECTION IS 1st MONDAY OF DECEMBER OF EACH CALENDAR YEAR</b>

### 8. TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINEE

**VOLUNTARY INFORMATION FOR MONITORING PURPOSES:** The following information is requested by the Federal Government in order to monitor FSA's compliance with federal laws prohibiting discrimination against program participants on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, handicapped condition, or age. You are not required to furnish this information, but are encouraged to do so. This information will not be used in evaluating your nomination or to discriminate against you in any way.

<u>ETHNICITY</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic or Latino	<u>RACE (Choose as many boxes as applicable)</u> <input type="checkbox"/> America Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African-American <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<u>GENDER</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
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### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM

Complete the form as follows:

**ITEM 1** Type or Print the nominee's full name. The nominee must be:

- A. Eligible to vote in the designated County FSA Committee election.
- B. Eligible to hold the office of County FSA Committee member.
- C. Willing to serve if elected.

**ITEM 2** Enter the nominee's current address.

**ITEM 3** The nominee must check one of the boxes to indicate a preference regarding the settling of tied votes.

**ITEM 4** The nominee must sign and date.

**ITEM 8** Completing this item is voluntary.

**ALL FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE COUNTY OFFICE OR POSTMARKED BY AUGUST 1.**

**NOTE:** The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a) and the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, as amended. The authority for requesting the following information is 7 CFR Part 7. The information will be used to obtain nominees for County FSA Committee.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0560-0229. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE.

**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**Yellowstone County FSA Office**  
**1629 Ave. D, Bldg. A**  
**Billings, MT 59102**

PRESORT STANDARD  
U. S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
BOZEMAN MT 59715  
PERMIT #54

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### **Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium**

Mark your calendars for the annual Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture Symposium to be held September 30 & October 1, 2008 at the Clock Tower Inn in Billings, Montana. The symposium begins at 8:00 a.m. on September 30 and ends on October 1 at 2:00 p.m.

A great slate of topics will be discussed such as Dispelling Agriculture Myths from the American Farm Bureau, a panel discussion from the congressional staffers, source water protection and farm-to-table. Ed Usset from the Minnesota Center for Farm Financial Management will be presenting "Grain Marketing is Simple." These are just a few of the topics, presentations, and activities that will occur during the two day event.

Cost of registration is \$60 which includes meals and presentations. Contact Heidi Brewer, FSA Public Affairs Specialist at (406) 587-6905 for additional details.

### **Conservation Compliance**

Federal regulations discourage the production of crops on highly erodible cropland unless the land is protected from erosion by an approved conservation system. Status reviews are conducted to ensure producers follow a conservation plan on highly erodible land. In addition to the highly erodible land, a person may not plant an agricultural commodity on wetlands converted after December 23, 1985, or convert a wetland to make agricultural production possible after November 28, 1990. Failure to comply with these provisions will cause a person to be ineligible for USDA benefits. County Committees may review noncompliance situations for good faith and provide relief in approved cases.

### **Proper Signature Authorization on File?**

FSA reviews every producer's eligibility file to determine who is authorized to sign program documents in representative capacities. In addition FSA reviews all program documents to determine if the signature format is proper. For a complete listing of FSA signature requirements, contact this office or logon to the Montana FSA website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/mt> and click on the **Signature Authority Pamphlet** link under "In the News."

### **NRCS Conservation Funding Application Deadline**

Although the finalization of the new Farm Bill has not been completed, NRCS is still taking applications for Conservation Programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). To be considered in the upcoming funding cycle, applications must be submitted to NRCS by June 1, 2008. If you are interested in developing a conservation plan and possible cost share to implement conservation practices, please contact the Billings NRCS office 657-6135, Extension 3.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."